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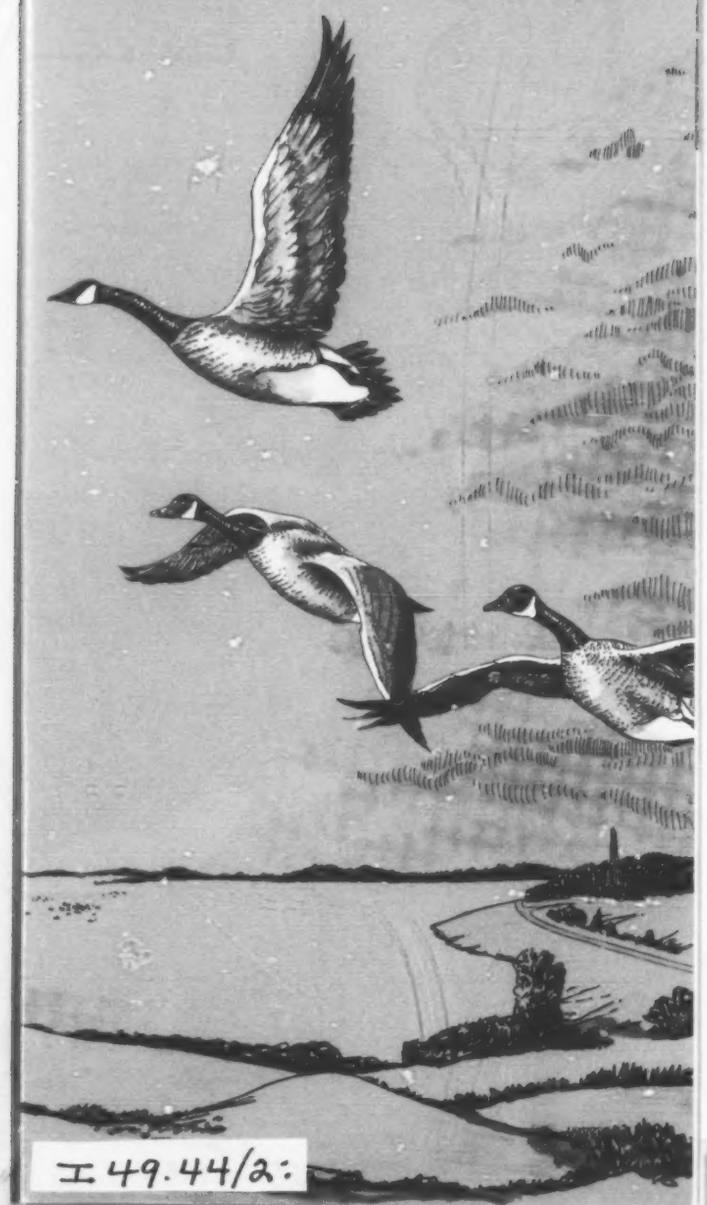
WAUBAY

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



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Canada goose on nest with gosling.

HISTORY

"A Nesting Place for Birds" is the literal translation of the Sioux Indian word "WAUBAY." No more appropriate name could be given to this Refuge, which hosts over 245 species of birds. Artist George Catlin described this area over 140 years ago as a "blue and boundless ocean of prairie." Located in the *Coteau des Prairie* or prairie hills region of South Dakota, numerous lakes and wetlands dot the landscape. This region was formed by deposits of mud and gravel left behind as the last glacier in the area melted and receded.

In the early 1900's, prior to being established as a wildlife Refuge, this area was part of a hunting club. Then, following the Dust Bowl years in 1935, Waubay Refuge was established to enhance the duck population that had been decimated by a lack of water during this era. The giant Canada goose had also been eliminated from this area by careless hunting and egg collection. The only giant Canada geese that remained were in captive flocks.

In 1937, giant Canada geese were reintroduced to the Refuge through the donation of a private flock. Young birds that hatched from this flock were allowed to fly free, gradually establishing a wild nesting population on the Refuge and in the surrounding area. Later, local businessmen donated additional geese and the nesting population became firmly established. Today, 15 to 20 pairs of geese and about 700 pairs of ducks regularly nest on the Refuge.

The Refuge is located in the prairie pothole region, the largest duck production area in the continental United States. This region of North and South Dakota, western Minnesota, and eastern Montana accounts for about 50% of the ducks produced in the United States.

"No living man will see again the longgrass prairie, where a sea of prairie flowers lapped at the stirrups of the pioneer. . ."

A Sand County Almanac
Aldo Leopold

Waubay National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters and Visitor Center.

TODAY

Waubay National Wildlife Refuge includes 4,650 acres of wetlands and upland habitat that provide nesting areas for over 100 species of birds. The Refuge also provides a home for 37 species of mammals and 8 species of reptiles and amphibians.

Providing proper habitat for courtship, nesting, and brood rearing of giant Canada geese and other waterfowl is the primary purpose of the Refuge. To help achieve this goal, over 35,000 acres of prime waterfowl habitat in a six county area have been purchased and are specifically managed for waterfowl production. Funds for these purchases come from the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp, which hunters are required to buy in addition to their hunting license prior to waterfowl hunting. In addition to these waterfowl habitat purchases, over 80,000 acres of privately-owned wetlands are protected from drainage or filling through agreements with landowners.

Since many ducks nest in upland areas, it is important to provide good grassland nesting cover. Good upland nesting cover is maintained by a variety of techniques including controlled burning, haying, grazing, and planting various cover crops and grasses.

The Refuge is located in a major waterfowl migration path called the Central Flyway. It provides birds with sanctuary for resting and feeding during the spring and fall migrations. No waterfowl hunting is permitted on the Refuge to provide protection to these birds. Various small grain crops are grown to provide food for the migrating flocks.

Refuge personnel strive to provide the public with the opportunity to observe, enjoy, and learn about wildlife in a natural setting. The Visitor Center and Headquarters building contains various interpretive exhibits in the multi-purpose room and basement. Environmental education programs are available upon request to various youth and adult groups with a variety of activities, games, and nature walks to choose from.

WATERFOWL

In addition to giant Canada geese, there are many species of waterfowl present on the Refuge. The diverse duck population includes both dabbling and diving ducks. Dabbling ducks (also known as puddle ducks) dabble and tip in shallow water for

Blue-winged teal brood.

food, and spring directly from the waters' surface into flight. Mallards are an example of a dabbling duck. Diving ducks dive under the surface of the water in search of food and must "patter" along the water surface to get airborne. Ruddy ducks are diving ducks.

Blue-winged teal are the most abundant duck on the Refuge. Other common duck species include gadwalls, redheads, and shovelers.

Although the giant Canada goose is the only species of goose that nests on the Refuge, during migration large flocks of snow geese; interior, Hutchinson, and lesser Canada geese; and white-fronted geese can be seen traveling between their summer nesting grounds in northern Canada and their wintering grounds along the Gulf Coast.

Wetlands on the Refuge provide excellent habitat for other waterbirds. The Refuge has five species of grebes nesting on it, including the red-necked grebe. Other common visitors include pelicans and cormorants, which nest on nearby islands called rookeries. Gulls, terns, herons, and various shorebirds are also commonly seen.

MAMMALS

The white-tailed deer is the most commonly seen mammal on the Refuge. Refuge woodlands provide ideal habitat for this secretive mammal. Your chance of spotting a deer is best in the early morning or at dusk. Fox squirrels and cottontail rabbits also inhabit the woodlands and can be frequently seen by the careful observer. Other species present, but seen less often, are red fox, raccoon, striped skunk, and woodchuck.

White-tailed deer fawn.

WETLAND BENEFITS

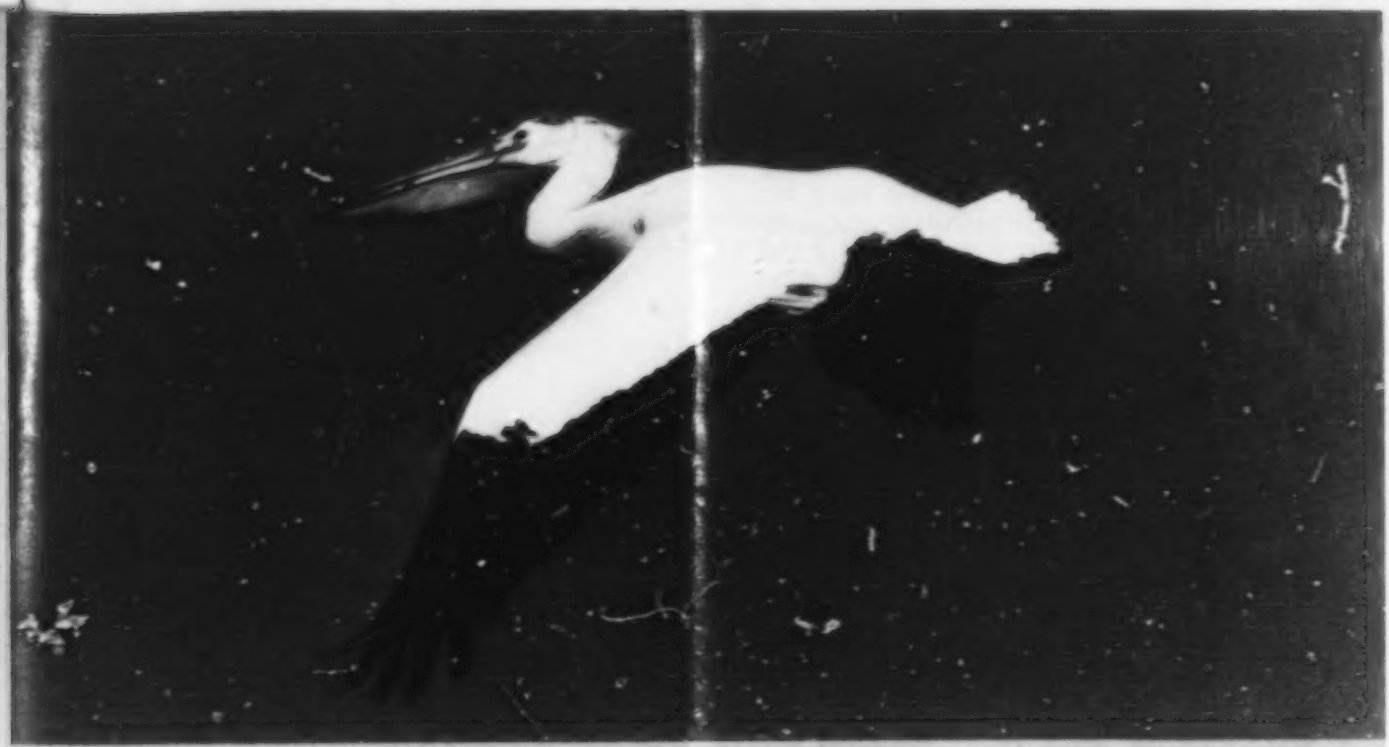
Besides providing excellent wildlife habitat, wetlands serve as a water reservoir, helping to prevent floods and erosion caused by runoff in the spring. By storing water and gradually allowing it to seep back into the soil, wetlands help recharge ground water levels. This decreases the evaporation rate from soils and in turn increases the water available for crops. Wetlands also are an effective pollution and sediment filtration system, helping to maintain water quality.

WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

The public access roads, picnic area (in season), and hiking trails are open for visitors during daylight hours. The Headquarters Building and Visitor Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- HEADQUARTERS AND VISITOR CENTER — This beautiful new building provides a warm welcome as well as numerous displays and exhibits. Please stop in, look around, and sign the guest book. If you have any questions, please ask. Refuge personnel will be happy to assist you in any way they can.
- HEADQUARTERS LOOP HIKING TRAIL — Starting at the Headquarters Office, this 0.5 mile interpreted hiking trail winds through a woodland of bur oak, American elm, and basswood. It leads past a semi-permanent wetland to the observation tower, down to the picnic area, and back to the Headquarters. This trail provides an excellent opportunity to observe a variety of birds.
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION TOWER — A climb to the top of this 100-foot tower provides good exercise and a birds-eye view of the surrounding countryside and lakes.
- PICNIC AREA — A stone picnic shelter, built in the 1930's, provides a protected fireplace and restful eating area nestled among a variety of hardwood trees. Fresh, cool drinking water is available from the pump.
- SPRING LAKE OVERLOOK TRAIL — A short hike (0.25 mile) to the top of the overlook provides a panoramic vista of four distinct wildlife habitats. Interpretive panels along the trail describe various features of Spring Lake, Spring Coulee, Refuge woodlands, and the grasslands of Waubay.
- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS — Classes in a lovely outdoor setting provide a truly exceptional educational experience. A variety of courses, activities, and hikes are available to teachers, groups, and classes. Films are available upon request. Hikes and classes conducted by Refuge personnel require advance notice.
- BIRDWATCHING — The Refuge offers a unique opportunity to observe a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and songbirds. Canada geese and a variety of ducks are often observed from the Visitor Center and the Headquarters Loop Hiking Trail. Spring and fall migration provides the largest number and variety of birds, however, many songbirds are summer residents. One such bird, the Eastern Bluebird, is seen quite often. A series of bluebird boxes have been established to help increase the bluebird population. Birdwatching provides entertainment for both the novice and the expert. See how many birds you can spot. Some ornithologists have logged over 100 bird species in a single day.
- CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAIL — For ski enthusiasts, a 6-mile trail winds through the woodlands, over grasslands, and around beautiful Hillebrand's Lake. This trail, open during the winter, provides an opportunity to "escape" and enjoy the beauty of winter at Waubay Refuge.
- HUNTING — The Refuge provides excellent hunting (archery and rifle) for white-tailed deer. Deer hunting is open according to State regulations. Although waterfowl cannot be hunted on the Refuge, hunting is permitted in surrounding areas. Stop at the Headquarters and get a copy of our hunting regulations and see photos of deer taken from the Refuge in previous seasons.
- PHOTOGRAPHY — For the nature photographer, the opportunities are boundless, limited only by the patience and enthusiasm of the observer.

Although camping is not permitted on the Refuge, excellent camping facilities are available at Pickerel Lake Recreation Area (see below).



White pelicans are a common sight on the Refuge.

NEARBY AREAS OF INTEREST

Blue Dog State Fish Hatchery — Located 8 mile south of the Refuge.

Pickerel Lake Recreation Area — Located 6 miles north of the Refuge on County Road 1.

Fort Sisseton State Historic Park — Located 28 miles north of the Refuge.

Sica Hollow — Located 40 miles north of the Refuge.

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

America's Federal, State, and local public lands provide important opportunities for YOU to enjoy the outdoors and learn about your natural surroundings and cultural heritage. Each year, millions of Americans just like you enjoy camping, hiking, boating, swimming, hunting, fishing, birdwatching, sightseeing, and learning about the natural and historical diversity of America's public lands.

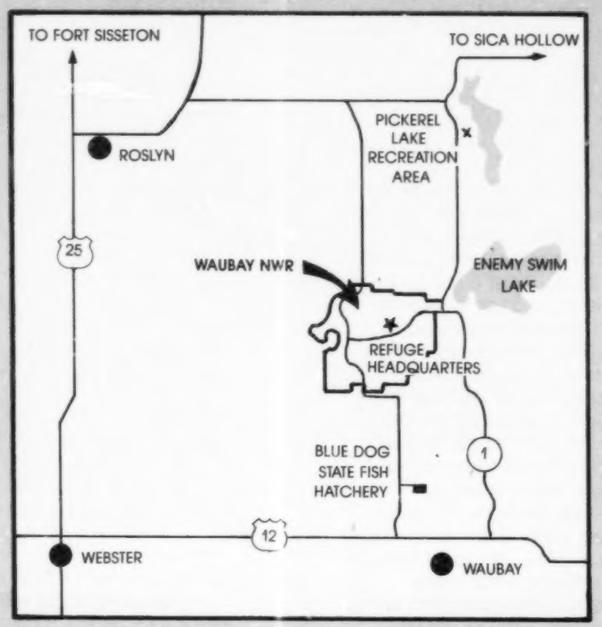
To help insure that public lands continue to meet increasing demands for recreation, Americans must develop a greater sense of ownership, pride, and responsibility for public lands.

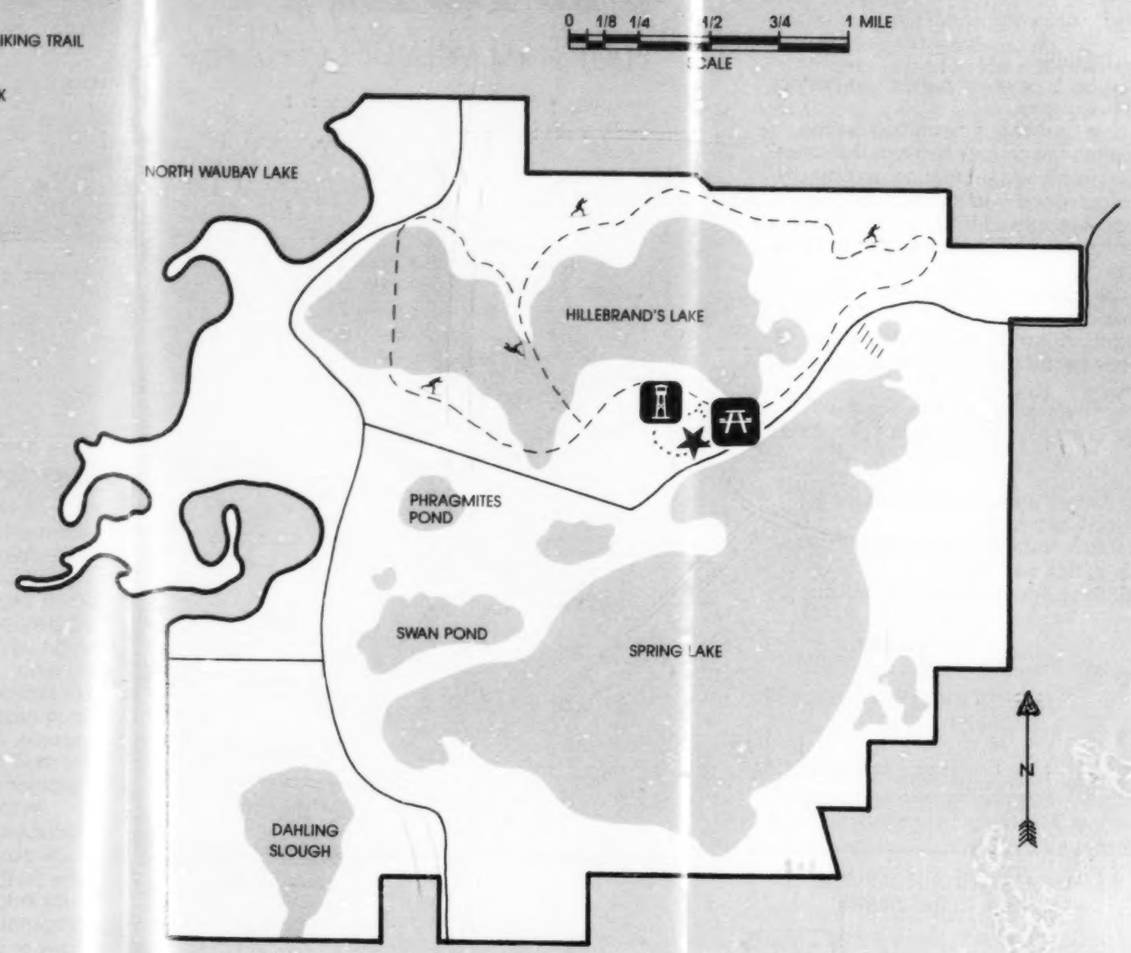
What can YOU do? Be proud of your public lands and use them wisely. Pick up litter when you see it. Report vandalism and misuse. Volunteer your time for special projects. Contact your local land managers to learn more about how you can help Take Pride in America.

"I have seen and lived among the plains and mountains of the west and the coniferous forests and open lakes of the north. . . yet for me, as an individual, no other natural feature has ever had the enduring attraction of an undespoiled chain of marshes in an undespoiled setting of glacial hills."

Of Men and Marches
Paul L. Errington

LEGEND
- REFUGE BOUNDARY
- HEADQUARTERS/VISITORS CENTER
- GRAVEL ROAD
- HEADQUARTERS LOOP HIKING TRAIL
- SKI TRAIL
- SPRING LAKE OVERLOOK
- REFUGE TOWER
- PICNIC AREA





REGULATIONS

1. The Refuge is open to public use during daylight hours only.
2. Only deer hunting is permitted on the Refuge within the proper seasons. All other hunting is prohibited. Hunters must comply with all regulations and should check with the Refuge Manager for further information.
3. All vehicles are restricted to designated roadways.
4. Fires are permitted only in fireplaces in the picnic area.
5. All plants, animals, and birds on the Refuge are protected and should not be disturbed.
6. Uses not expressly permitted in this brochure or on Refuge signs are prohibited.

For further information, contact the Refuge Manager:
WAUBAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
R.R. 1, P.O. Box 79
Waubay, South Dakota 57273.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Department of the Interior

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